

# God's Indescribable Gift

by Mark Jarvinen

**II Corinthians 9:15** says, ***“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!”*** or, as one translation puts it, ***“It’s a gift too wonderful for words!”***

Unless you’ve been living under a rock, you’re sure to have at some time seen the portrayal of the Charles Dickens’ story, “A Christmas Carol.” In fact it was one of two Christmas drama’s being presented at Silver Dollar City in Branson last week when we visited there. As you know, Ebenezer Scrooge, the main character, underwent a major change of heart, going from being self-centered, greedy, and cranky, to becoming kind-hearted, generous, and joyful, as he realized that Christmas means giving to others – out of the same generous spirit that God gave the human race the best gift of all – JESUS – His Indescribable Gift.

Let’s attempt to do the impossible this morning and describe the meaning of God’s gift to us in Christ, even though His fullness is indeed ***“too wonderful for words.”***

## ***I. HE’S THE GIFT THAT’S PERSONAL.***

Think of how much we all enjoy receiving gifts at Christmas that express the personal touch – another person knows us well enough

to get us exactly what we want or need most. Think about how well God knows each of us. **Psalm 139:1-3** says,

***Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.***

Those of you who have had your own children, or have been around newborn grandchildren lately have felt the surprisingly strong tug as you have placed your finger in that little hand. That tug of your finger has also tugged at your heartstrings. Similarly, someone has said that ***“Christmas is the powerful grip of a tiny hand reaching from a bed of straw, seeking to tug our hearts back to God.”*** This is a picture of the intimately personal nature of Christmas: God gave us His Son for our sake.

***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).***

Think about it! God came to our level in the coming of Christ to this world. He couldn't have possibly made himself bigger to impress us, so instead he made himself smaller to come alongside us – as a babe in a manger. One of Jesus' titles is ***“Emmanuel”*** which translates as ***“God with us.”*** Jesus has become for all who receive Him by faith, a gift that could not be more personal.

## ***II. HE'S THE GIFT THAT'S PRACTICAL.***

A woman once stuck her Christmas wish list to the fridge for her husband to read. She kept it very simple for him, asking only for ***“something that will make me look slim and beautiful.”*** When

Christmas arrived, she looked forward to opening a gift with something gorgeously intimate inside. ***Instead she got an exercise bike.*** It was an intensely practical gift, but hardly what she had in mind.

Husbands often blow it when it comes to gift giving, but God knows how to give gifts that are intimately personal, yet intensely practical, in a way that's totally fitting to our deepest need. **Romans 6:23** says,

***“For the wages of sin is death (eternal separation from God), but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

By nature we are sinners, having inherited our sinful natures from Adam and Eve's first transgression in their garden paradise. As a result, we sin every day in thought, word and deed. From the start, we deserve nothing but God's righteous judgment. But in God's plan he lovingly provided for our rescue – Jesus' death on the cross became payment in full for our sins. God poured out his wrath against our sin on His Son, instead of on us. As we trust in Christ's sacrifice for our sin, we receive this gift – the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We sin every day, multiple times per day, and God hates sin. But as much as God hates sin, he loves sinners more and gives the gift that keeps on giving – the forgiveness of sins through Christ. Can you imagine a gift more practical?

Jesus is the gift that's personal and practical, but He's also ...

### ***III. THE GIFT THAT'S PERMANENT.***

Kids and Christmas go together so well, don't you think? Out of their love for their children, parents will sometimes go to great lengths

and extra expense to provide that perfect gift for each child. But ironically, after a few minutes of concentrated play with their new toy, they seem much more interested in the empty boxes and crinkled wrapping paper. Or then there's the toy that doesn't come with batteries or doesn't work at all, and expectancy turns to disappointment.

By contrast, God's gift to us is permanent, not perishable – not temporary, but eternal. Listen to the words of Jesus in **John 5:24** – ***“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”***

Something that is eternal is real in the present moment and is without end. That's the extent of the life we have in Christ. What a gift!

#### ***IV. THE GIFT THAT'S PURCHASED.***

A little nine-year-old boy named Johnny, while growing up in the little town of Jackson, MN, was caught stealing by a local shopkeeper. His punishment? It was to write down everything he had ever stolen from any store in Jackson and then give the list to an authority far more worrisome than the local authorities – his own father. Little Johnny is here today having learned his lesson. **John Westby** – take a bow. John shared this story with me several years ago and I've kept it on file all these years for a moment like this.

**What's the moral of this story for us?** If you're in a store to pick out a Christmas gift, it's a good idea to purchase the gift before leaving. **God's gift to us, was likewise, purchased.** Now

understand that God freely gave us the gift of His Son, but the gift wasn't cheap – in fact, it came at a huge cost. What was the cost? Christ's precious blood – more valuable than silver or gold. **I Peter 1:18-20** says –

***“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”***

One Christmas, a grandmother could not decide what to give her three grandchildren. She decided to simply put a check for **\$50** in each card with the message ***“buy your own gift.”*** The cards went out in the mail, but several days later the grandmother found the three checks among a stack of bills on her desk. **She had forgotten to include them with the cards.** Can you imagine how the grandchildren felt upon opening their cards only to find the message ***“buy your own gift?”***

This is the startling truth of the gospel – Jesus Christ, born in a manger in human form, did not leave us to buy our own gift. Instead, he grew to manhood to become our gift. On the cross, he became our sacrifice for sin, thereby purchasing our redemption. God spent everything He had on us in giving us this **indescribable gift**. It's a gift we should never want to exchange for anything else. It's the greatest gift known to mankind – and you didn't have to earn it – just receive it. ***“... to all who received him, to those who believed in***

***his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).***

***Now back to our Dickens story.*** After realizing the emptiness of his life and the error of his ways, Scrooge knelt at a manger asking for forgiveness. What might receiving the gift of Jesus look like in your life? It's as simple as praying ***“God I need this gift more than anything else in the world, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.”***

**A-men.**